AN HISTORICAL CATECHISM:

CONTAINING

Ingenious Answers to many notable Questions of several wonderful Matters in

ANCIENT HISTORY.

As, What is the opinion of all our historians about the Apple old Mother Eve tempted Adam with. Why the devil should take the shape of a serpent. Of the building of the tower of Babel nine miles round by 500,000 men, who left off confounded in their language. Also serious questions about Sodom and Gomorrah, Noah's Ark and Solomon's Temple. Informing us from scripture, what day that was that the like was never before, nor ever shall be. Likewise giving a full account of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the slaughter of three millions of Jews, and how the remainder were dispersed and scattered over the face of the whole earth. Also Josephus and the Romans account of our Saviour, and the miracles wrought at his birth. Particularly a remarkable story about the great Mogul, and a divining ape; with a wonderful apparition that happened at Mahomet's Tomb. The wonderful prophecies of the ten Sybils; and a marvellous relation of seven sleepers, who slept about 200 years.

GLASGOW:

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The HISTORICAL CATECHISM.

Queſt. WHAT apple or fruit was it that Adam eat in Paradiſe, and thereby brought ſin and death upon him, and all his poſterity?

Anſw. It is uncertain, for the holy ſcriptures mention it not; and authors vary in their opinions; ſome ſay it was a Perſian apple growing where Paradiſe was ſituated; others imagine it was a golden apple, a cherry, or a pear: but the ancient Romans believe it was a muſk apple.

Q. What may be the reaſon why the devil ſhould aſſume the ſhape of a ſerpent above all other creatures, and that out of the putrifaction of man's body worms are produced?

A. Melancthon ſays, From man's being deluded by the ſerpent in paradiſe, the devil delighted in that ſhape, and out of man's corruption and the filth of his ſin, worms and ſerpents do ſpring: for man being prone to ſin, from the putrifaction of his body, ſuch creatures are ingendered, as a mark of our original ſin.

Q. What account doth the ancients give of Babel?

A. It was the moſt famous ſtructure after Noah's flood: for Nimrod perſuaded the people to build a large and high edifice, to reſiſt the fury of a ſecond deluge. They built this tower, 5164 paces from the ground: the going up was winding and broad, there being not only room for horſes and carts, but lodging for men and beaſts, with graſs and corn fields. And wonderful it was to conſider, that but eight perſons came out of Noah's ark, this building was carried on by 500,000 men, the foundation being nine miles round: but God confuſed their tongues, and put a ſtop to their work, one not being able to underſtand another, as expreſt by the poet,

Bring me, quoth one, a trowl quickly, quick
One brings him up a hammer; hew this brick,
Another bids, and then they cleave a tree;
Make faſt this rope, and then they let it flee;
One calls for planks, another mortar lacks;
They bring the firſt a ſtone, the laſt an ax.
One would have nails, and him a ſpade they give,
Another aſks a ſaw, and gets a ſieve!
Thus croſs'd they call, and rail in vain,
What one hath made, another ſpoils again,
This made them leave their work, and like mad fools,
Scatter their ſtuff, and tumble down their tools.

Q. Why were mens lives longer before Noah's flood than ſince?

A. As the world declines, ſo does the nature of all there

in, meteors, comets and eclipſes that produce diſeaſes, were then ſeldom ſeen, together with our exceſſive drinking, which deſtroys more than the ſword.

Q. What day was that the like was never before or ſince?

A. When Joſhua prayed in the midſt of the battle, ſo that the ſun ſtood ſtill, and haſtened not to go down until it made the day 24 hours long, whereas naturally it was but 14 or 15 hours.

Q. What part of the earth was that which was ſeen only four times of mankind?

A. The bottom of the river Jordan divided by God, paſſed over by Moſes, and the children of Iſrael; ſeen after by Moſes, Joſhua, Elijah and Eliſha.

Q. What do the hiſtorians ſay of Solomon's temple?

A. The temple was built on a rocky foundation, 300 cubits deep, the ſtones forty cubits high, porches double ſupported by ſtately pillars 25 cubits high, of marble, the tops of cedar. The porches 30 cubits broad. The courts payed with all ſorts of ſtones like fine lattices, all the gates covered with plates of gold. The Holy of Holies was in the midſt. The fineſt gate 70 cubits high, and had 20 doors: all the fore parts were gilded, and within covered with fine gold, about the wall was a golden vine, the cluſters like grapes of gold, each cluſter ſix feet long. It had golden gates and hinges wrought with gold, and had the fabrick covered with maſſy gold.

The tops was ſet with rods of gold ſharp like ſpikes, leſt birds ſhould ſit thereon and defile it. The temple was firſt built by king Solomon, and afterwards plundered by Siſback king of Egypt and others: but laſtly by Nebuchadnezzar, who laid this city and temple even to the ground. Yet after that, rebuilt by Herod the great: but about forty years after the death of our Saviour, the ſins of the Jews being come to their height, it was deſtroyed by Titus, ſon of Veſpaſian, emperor of Rome.

Q. What were the dreadful ſigns and wonders which foretold the deſtruction of Jeruſalem?

A. The year before the Romans came, a bright ſtar appeared over the temple, as if a man had held many drawn ſwords in his hands, and the temple was as light as at noonday, ſeven nights together. A heifer being knocked down for ſacrifice, brought forth a lamb. A man's face was ſeen in the Holy of Holies looking very earneſtly. Four chariots with horſemen were ſeen fighting in the air. In the temple the prieſt heard a terrible voice, ſaying, "Come let us go out of the temple, let us haſten from hence." But they regarded them not till ſudden deſtruction fell upon them.

Q. What country is looked upon to be the moſt deſolate and ſolitary in the world?

A. The land about Sodom and Gomorrah; where were 13 cities built on a fruitful ſoil, a ſecond paradiſe; but they ſinned greatly, for which God rained down brimſtone and fire from heaven, which deſtroyed their land, leaving not one ſtone upon another, nor any witneſs of their former ſplendor or glory, but a poiſonous ſmell of fire and brimſtone; which, by its vapours, ſtifles the birds that fly over this ſtinking lake, that they fall down dead, and the fiſh that are carried into it out of the river Jordan are choaked with it. Inſtead of pulpy vine, there are now ſome apples of a glorious appearance, but within are full of ſulphureous aſhes.

Q. What became of the Jewiſh nation, after that wicked act of crucifying the Lord of life?

A. God's judgments according to their deſerts, and our Saviour's prophecy overtook them: for the Romans with a great army beſieged, plundered, and burnt the city and temple. There periſhed by famine, fire, ſword, and quarrels, 1100000 people; the ſiege beginning at the time of the paſſover, in a manner when all the Jews in Paleſtine were encloſed in that city, ſo that there were in it more ſtrangers than inhabitants. The paſſover that was firſt inſtituted by God in mercy, to ſave the Iſraelites from death in Egypt, was now uſed by him in juſtice to haſten their deſtruction, and conſumed them in the fire of his anger. And thoſe that eſcaped, became a ſcattered people over the whole earth.

Q. What became of the remainder?

A. Beſides theſe that were ſlain 97,000 were taken captives, and they who had bought our Saviour's blood off Judas for 30 pieces of ſilver, were themſelves ſold for thirty a penny. The Chriſtians that were in the city being forewarned of our Saviour's predictions, and many other prodigies, fled betimes out of Jeruſalem to Pella, a town beyond Jordan, which ſerved inſtead of a little Zoar, to ſave them from imminent deſtruction.

Q. Was there ever any attempt made to rebuild the temple of Jeruſalem?

A. Yes; Julian the apoſtate, emperor of Rome, reſolved to build it in oppoſition to Chriſt's prophecy, "That one ſtone ſhould not be left upon another," but when the workmen were laying the foundation a dreadful earthquake happened, ſo that the work and workmen were deſtroyed.

Q. What did they diſcover at laying the foundation?

A. There was a ſtone which ſlipt from its place, and diſcovered the mouth of a cave, wherein was found a book very freſh, wrapt in linen cloth, which the Jews and Grecians opened, and therein found written, IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE

WORD WAS GOD. Which contained all the Goſpel that St. John had declared.

Q. What account doth Joſephus give of our Saviour?

A. That Jeſus was a wiſe man, ſhewed wonders, and taught the truth to them that followed him.

Q. What miracles happened at the birth of Chriſt?

A. At his birth the temple of Rome dedicated to an heathen goddeſs, fell to the ground: When it was firſt built the Romans enquired of their oracle Apollo, how long it ſhould ſtand? Who anſwered, "'Till a virgin ſhould bring "forth a Son;" which made them think it would ſtand for ever. St. Jerom ſays, when the Virgin Mary fled with her Son to Egypt, all images of their gods fell down, and oracles and devils ceaſed.

Q. What is farther related of the death of Chriſt, beſides what we find in the holy ſcriptures?

A. In the 34th year of our bleſſed Saviour's life he was crucified by the wicked Jews, which produced prodigious effects, atteſted as well by Heathens as Chriſtians. At his death there was a great darkneſs in the day time, from 3 o'clock, at which time our Saviour gave up the ghoſt, till 6, and yet there was no eclipſe of the Son, it being then full moon: So that it was only by the power of God, who deprived the ſun of its light for that ſpace of time. And Dioniſius being that day at Athens, and knowing by the courſe of the heavens, that this eclipſe muſt be unnatural, cried out, "Either the world is at an end, or the God of nature "ſuffers!" And the wiſe men at Athens being aſtoniſhed at this prodigy, ordered an altar to be built, and dedicated it to the unknown God, for which St. Paul reproved them, declaring that Jeſus Chriſt the Redeemer of the world, who had ſuffered death by the Jews was the unknown God; whereby he converted many to the Chriſtian faith.

Q. Is there not another relation of this?

A. Yes, Plutarch publiſhed the following account. That his father coming by ſea towards Italy, and coaſting about the Iſland Paraxis, when all the ſhips crew were at reſt, they heard a dreadful voice from that Iſland, calling to Alaman who was pilot of the ſhip, and an Egyptian born; this voice was heard twice, yet none had the courage to anſwer, till at the third call, Alaman cry'd, Who calls? What would you have? The voice then ſpoke louder, and ſaid, "When you paſs near the gulf of Laguna, I charge "you to cry aloud, and make them to underſtand, that the "great God Pan is dead." The ſhips company were aſtoniſhed thereat, but concluded he ſhould take no notice of the voice, but proceed on their voyage. When they came to the place the ſhip ſtood ſtill, ſo that they could ſail no further; whereupon Alaman placed himſelf upon the poup of

the ſhip, and cry'd aloud, "Be it known unto you that the great god Pan is dead." He had no ſooner ſaid this, but the air echoed with mournful cries, which ſurpriſed thoſe in the ſhip. But having afterwards a proſperous gale to Rome, told the emperor. The ſame author owns that about this time, not only the oracles of Egypt ceaſed, but throughout the whole world, for which he could give no reaſon, but that Satan did plainly confeſs himſelf to be overthrown by the death of Chriſt, and could never again give any anſwers.

Q. What account did the Romans give of Chriſt?

A. In the reign of Tiberius Ceſar, Lentulus the Roman Governor of Judea, wrote the following letter.

"There appeared in thoſe days, a man of great virtue, "called Jeſus Chriſt, who is yet living among us, and by "the people is called a prophet, but his diſciples call him "the Son of GOD. He raiſeth the dead, and cureth all "manner of diſeaſes, a man of ſtature, ſomewhat tall and "comely, with a reverend countenance, ſuch as the beholders may both fear and love. His hair is of the colour of "a cheſnut full ripe, and plain down almoſt to his ears, but "from thence downward ſomewhat curled, but more orient "of colours waving about his ſhoulders. In the midſt of "his head goeth a ſeam of his hair, like the Nazarens: "his face beautify'd with a comely red; his mouth and "noſe ſo formed, that nothing can be reprehended. His "beard thick, the colour of the hair of his head. His "eyes grey, clear and quick. In reproving he is ſevere, in "counſelling courteous, fair ſpoken, pleaſant in ſpeech, "mixt with gravity: It cannot be remembered that any "body has ſeen him laugh, but often to weep; in proportion of body well ſhaped and ſtraight; his arms and "hands delectable to behold. In ſpeaking very temperate, "modeſt and wiſe: A Man for his ſingular beauty, far exceeding the ſons of men."

Q. Is there not a ſtrange relation of an apparition that happened at Mahomet's tomb?

A. Mr Knowls in his hiſtory of the Turks, affirms as a certain truth, that in 1620, a ſurpriſing viſion was ſeen at Medina in Arabia, where Mahomet lies buried, which continued 20 days, terrifying the whole country. September 20th in that year, a great tempeſt of wind, rain and thunder happened about midnight, but when the ſky became clear the people might plainly read in Arabian characters theſe words "Oh! why will you believe in lies?" and between two and three in the morning appeared a woman in white, ſeeming to be encompaſſed with the ſun, having a chearful countenance with a book in her hand over againſt her were ſeen armies of Turks, Perſians, Arabians, and other Mahometans in battle array, ready to fight with her, but

ſhe keeping her ſtation, only opening the book, at which the armies fled, and preſently all the lamps about Mahomet's tomb went out, for when the viſion vaniſhed, an hour before ſun-riſing, a murmuring wind was heard, to which they imputed the extinguiſhing of the lamps.

Q. Is there not a remarkable ſtory of the great Mogul in the Eaſt Indies?

A. Yes, it happened ſome years before Sir Thomas Rowe was ambaſſador for King James the firſt to his court, that a juggler of Bengal brought an ape before the Mogul that did many ſtrange feats: the King to try his ſkill, plucked a ring off his finger, and gave it to one of his boys to hide which he preſently diſcovered: at laſt this ſtrange fancy came into his head, there are many diſputes, ſays he, concerning the true Prophet that ſhould come into the world. We are for Mahomet, the Perſians magnify Mettis Ally: the Hindoes or heathens extol Braman Ram and others; the Jews are for Moſes, and the Chriſtians for Chriſt, adding ſeveral others to the number of twelve, whoſe names he cauſed to be write on twelve ſcrolls and put in a baſon; this done, the ape puts in his paw among them and pulls out the name of Chriſt. He then cauſed the names to be written a ſecond time in other ſcrolls, and the ape again pluckt out the name of Chriſt as before. Upon this one of the Mogul's favourites ſaid it was an impoſture of the Chriſtians, and deſired a third trial, with only eleven names, reſerving that of Chriſt's in his hand. The ape ſearching as before, pulled out his empty paw; whereupon the Mogul was told, that poſſibly the thing he look'd for was not there; the ape was bide to ſearch for it, who bringing thoſe 11 namss one after another, in ſeeming indignation rent them all to pieces; and catching the favourite by the hand, where the name of Chriſt was concealed opened and held it up to the Mogul without tearing the ſame. Upon which the Mogul gave his keeper a penſion calling him the divining ape. The truth whereof ſaith Mr Terry, captain to Sir Thomas Rowe, is confirmed by ſeveral perſons of different religions.

Q. What were theſe women called Sybils who propheſied of our bleſſed Lord, ſome hundreds of years before he was born?

A. They were reckoned to be ten in number, and to have the ſpirit of prophecy and uttered many ſpeeches concerning Chriſt, very agreeable to thoſe of the Jewiſh prophets, or rather in more plains terms than they, though the heathens to whom they were ſpoken underſtood them not. Yea they are thought of great importance for confirming the truth of the Chriſtian religion, and they are often adduced by the fathers of the primitive church againſt the enemies to the faith of Jeſus. And Conſtantine the firſt Chriſtian emperor

affirms, that a learned Heathen who lived an hundred years before Chriſt's nativity, gives an account at large of the number, writings, country, and ages of the ten Sybils, and the author that mentions them before his time.

Q. What is related in ancient hiſtory concerning the ſeven ſleepers?

A. They were born in the city of Epheſus, in the time when Decius, the Heathen Roman emperor perſecuted the Chriſtians, theſe good men being of that profeſſion: whoſe names were Maximilian, Malobus, Marchianus, Dionas, John Sarophram, and Conſtantius, to avoid torture, and the worſhip of idols, fled into a cave, in mount Celion, after long praying, watching, and faſting, they fell aſleep; the emperor expecting they were in that cave, caused the mouth thereof to be ſtopt up with ſtones, ſo that they might die with hunger. Decius and that generation being dead; Theodocious a Chriſtian emperor after many years ſucceeded, at which time a citizen of Epheſus, deſigning to make a lodge for his ſhepherds in that cave, and the workmen opening the mouth of it, theſe ſeven Chriſtians, that he had ſlept all this time, awaked and ſaluted each other, verily ſuppoſing they had ſlept but one night, and began to remember their heavineſs the day before. They ſent Malobus to buy bread in the city, and gave him five ſhillings; coming to the mouth of the cave, he wondered to ſee the maſons at work; and going into the city, he found all things altered, and the croſs ſet up on the churches; he then went to them that ſold bread, and they ſpoke of Chriſt, at which he much wondered that there ſhould be ſuch a change ſince yeſterday, when none durſt ſpeak of the true God, but he was now profeſſed openly. But when he offered the baker money for bread, the coin was moulded, then the people ſaid, "Sure this young man hath found ſome ancient treaſure!" Upon which they carry'd him before the biſhop and counſel; where he declared that he and ſix more had hid themſelves yeſterday in a cave to eſcape the cruelty of Decius, and had taken that money with them. The emperor Theodocius being made acquainted therewith, he with many others went and found the other ſix chearful and hearty, their garments not being worn by age or time; the emperor thereupon glorified God, embracing and weeping over each of them for joy, ſaying, "I receive you like ſo many Lazaruſes riſen from your "graves!" they continued alive ſome ſhort time after and then died, and were buried in great pomp and ſtate by the emperor. It appeared they had ſlept two hundred and eight years.

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